

Performance measures and Part D plans

ISSUE: Although the Medicare prescription drug benefit provides drug benefits to more than 24 million Medicare beneficiaries, policymakers have limited information to evaluate the performance of the standalone drug plans and Medicare Advantage drug plans that deliver the benefit. How can beneficiaries and the government compare plan performance? Are data available to construct useful performance measures?

KEY POINTS: Since 2006, Medicare beneficiaries have had the option of receiving outpatient drug benefits through stand-alone prescription drug plans (PDPs) or Medicare Advantage prescription drug (MA-PD) plans. Policymakers need to evaluate plan performance and to measure how well plans meet cost, access, and quality objectives for pharmaceutical care. CMS currently provides plan performance measures on its Plan Finder website to help beneficiaries choose their plans. In February, we convened an expert panel to identify ways in which we could use measures to monitor the Part D program over time and evaluate participating plans' performance. Panelists discussed the measures available on the website and how these measures could be improved.

For this presentation, we present panel ideas about how to evaluate the drug benefit. We also discuss findings from focus groups with beneficiaries, physicians, and pharmacists on their experiences with the drug benefit.

ACTION: Commissioners should address the direction of the analysis and whether additional issues should be addressed.

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